Commandments, to renounce Salvation; and all this for the ſake of *Religion.*

But whatever others may ſay in ſome circumſtances is lawfull to be done for their *Religion,* I hope none of us do ſuppoſe ſuch a practice allowable for the ſake of our own; which is in a very bad caſe, if that be the beſt expedient we can find to ſupport it. Rom. 3. 8. *We muſt not do evill,* and if not any, then certainly not ſo great an evill, *that good may come.* God ſtands not in need of our good, much leſs of our evil actions. Truth, as it doth not need, ſo neither will it admit the aſſiſtance of falſhood to keep it up. If it did, it would acquire only a reproach and diſeſteem to it ſelf: for men do diſparage any cauſe which by ſuch methods they endeavour to mantain. And 'tis utterly impoſſible that ever the true Religion ſhould allow of ſuch practiſes as overturn the foundations of all *Religion.*

Wherefore we are all of us obliged for the honour of our God, and of our Religion, for our own ſake, and for the hope that we have of everlaſting Salvation, when we *have taken an oath to bind our Souls with a bond, not to break our word, but to do according to all that proceedeth out of our mouth; when we have vowed a vow unto the Lord not to neglect to pay it; for the Lord our God will ſurely require it of us.*

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Deut. 23. 21.

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10

# A SERMON

Preached at

## *Guilford* in *Surrey*

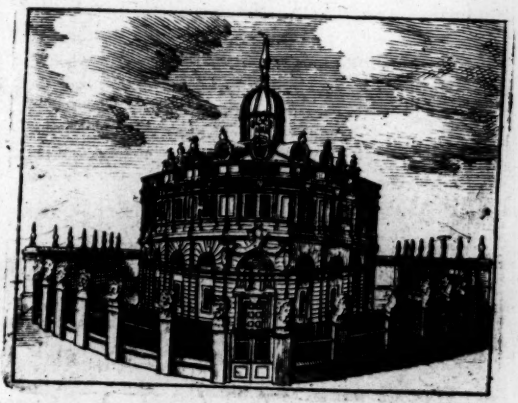
*June* the 22*d*, 1691. 10

AT THE

Lord Biſhop of *WINCHESTER'S*

# VISITATION.

By *T. SPARK* D. D. Rector of *Ewhurſt* in *Surrey*, and late Student of Chriſt Church in *Oxford*.



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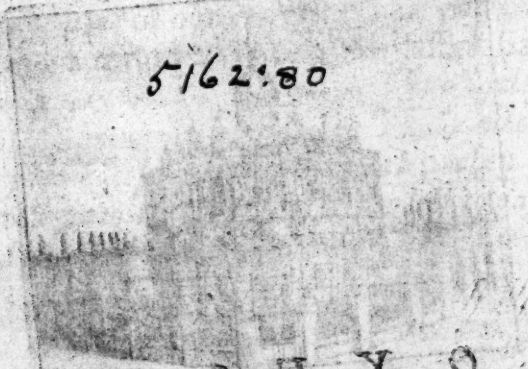

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TO THE

RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD

# PETER

Lord Bishop of WINCHESTER,

AND

*Prelate* of the Noble Order of the GARTER,

MY LORD,

*WHAT I Preach'd at your Lordship's command I now offer to the publick view, hoping, that, if by the seasonable plainess of the discourse some do not receive that satisfaction which I desire, none will take that offence which was never intended. For as Unity is the subject of my discourse so I am not conscious to my self, that I have let any thing fall which may*

*may enflame the diviſion, or make the breach wider. If in this or any other inſtance I have done the Church of God the leaſt ſervice, I ſhall think my ſmall pains very amply rewarded, however I cannot miſs of a ſecondary end, which is the publick acknowledgment of that duty which I ſhall always owe to your Lordſhip, under the character of*

My Lord,

Your Lordſhips

moſt Obedient Son

and moſt Humble Servant

*T. SPARK.*

# A Viſitation Sermon.

1 Cor. 1. v 10. *Now I Beſeech you brethren by the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ye all ſpeak the ſame thing and that there be no diviſions among you, but that ye be perfectly joyn'd together in the ſame mind and in the ſame judgment.*

IN the Church of *Corinth* there were many Teachers, and all of them endued with excellent gifts for the furtherance of the work of the Miniſtry and the better propagation of the Goſpel; But in theſe firſt and early dawnings of Chriſtianity the ſpirit of diſſenſion began to operate ſtrongly amongſt the *Corinthians*, parties and factions dayly multiply'd, and in ſo great a number of Teachers they had almoſt forgot Chriſt, whilſt one ſide cry'd up his abilities whom they follow'd, or ſet him up in oppoſition to another who had drawn after him a conſiderable train; according as they were led by fancy or affection. Their language was confus'd and promiſcuous

v. 12. *I am of* Paul *and I am of* Apollo, *I of* Cephas, *and I of* Chriſt, an thus they put Religion to an open ſhame by making it an occaſion of all their diviſions, whereas the end of it was to reduce them to a perfect unity. And therefore St. *Paul* here in my Text exhorts and adjures them by the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that name which they had ſo baſely treated, ſo deſpitefully us'd, that they would all ſpeak the ſame thing, *&c.*

In which words you may obſerve how earneſt and paſſionate, and yet withal how ſoft and gentle St. *Paul* is in his addreſs to them; for he might have terrifyed them with the rod of his Apoſtolical power, but becauſe harſher uſage might poſſibly have confirm'd them in this ill practice and a rigid reproof encreas'd the bold inſolence of ſome ſinners, He beſeeches them by the name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, calls them ſtill bretheren though they walked diſorderly, and indeavours to win them over by all the endeering methods of ſpiritual eloquence. And to the *Philippians* he uſes the ſame rhetoric, either to prevent them from falling into the ſame fault, or becauſe they were already guilty of it, 2 Phil. 1. 2. *If there be any conſolation in Chriſt, if any comfort of Love, if any fellowſhip of the Spirit,*

*Spirit, any bowels of mercy, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like minded having the ſame love, of one accord, of one mind.*

There are two parts in the adviſe of my Text.

1*ſt.* to ſpeak the ſame thing, that there may be no diverſity in the doctrines which are deliver'd.

2*ly*, To be perfectly joyned in the ſame mind and in the ſame judgment, or as the laſt words, ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ γνώμῃ, may very well be rendred, in the ſame purpoſe, which includes in it a complyance of the will and affections.

But before I inſiſt upon the duty, I will conſider the motives which ſhould engage us to it, and theſe St. *Paul* has placed together as links of the ſame chain 4. *Eph.* 4. 5. There is but one hope of our calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptiſm, and therefore where there is ſo much unity, it is pity that there ſhould be any diviſion. And

1*ſt. We have but one hope of our calling.* Happineſs in general is the aim of all rational beings, and the deſire of it is ſo interwoven with our nature, that though we often miſtake the object, we cannot quit the purſuit of what we apprehend moſt agreeable to our inclinations. But now that we may not erre in our choiſe nor propoſe to our

ſelves ſuch a ſatisfaction as is not laſting and durable, Chriſt has brought life and immortality to light through the Goſpel, 2 *Tim.* 1. 10. He has diſpell'd thoſe clouds with which they were formerly overcaſt, and inſtead of thoſe uncertain gueſſes which men once entertain'd of a future ſtate, He has for our encouragement plac'd it in a clearer view, and ſet the price of our high calling before our eyes, that we may ſo run as to be able to obtain. As many therefore as worſhip the ſame God in proſpect of the ſame reward which he has promiſed, eternal life, as many of us as act upon the like motives, and are ſupported by the ſame hope and expectation, are conſequently members of the ſame ſpiritual ſociety, which by reaſon of this unity can be but One.

2*ly* We have but one Lord, *For other foundation can no man lay then that is layd which is Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 *Cor.* 3. 11. He is the head from which all ſenſe and motion, all influence and vigor are derived to the ſeveral parts of his myſtical body, The only mediator between God and man, who by his blood has purified us from the uncleaneſs and corruption of our own, and as St. *Paul* determin'd not to know any thing ſave Jeſus Chriſt and him crucified 1 *Cor.* 2. *v.* 2. ſo muſt

it

it be our endeavour to be perfectly inſtructed in the ſame leſſon, *to know him and the power of his reſurrection, and the fellowſhip of his ſufferings being made conformable to his death*, *Phil.* 3. 10. for if the only terms and conditions by which we can be juſtified, are to acknowledg the virtue and efficacy which the reſurrection of Chriſt has to raiſe us to newneſs of life, and to make us partakers of his death by dying unto Sin as he once dy'd to the world, It will follow that in theſe reſpects the whole ſociety of believers may be reputed as One, for as much as in the capacity of ſervants we own him for our common Maſter, as ſubjects we confeſs his right of ſovereignty over us, *for God has put all things under his feet* 1 Cor. 15. 27. As ſheep we follow him only who has promiſed *Jo.* 10. *v.* 16. *that there ſhall be one fold and one ſhepheard; As we are the Temple of the living God* 2 *Cor.* 6. 16. we are aſſured that he is the foundation on which the ſpiritual building is rais'd, the rock which cannot be mov'd, and the corner ſtone in which both Jews and Gentiles are by a cloſe union knit and connected together.

3*ly*, We have but one Faith, that which was once delivered to the Saints, which the Apoſtles received from Chriſt and afterwards tranſmitted

to succeeding ages. And if we look upon the Church which was first established after the desent of the holy spirit, We shall find the believers recommended to us under this character that they continued stedfastly in the Apostles doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread and in prayers *Acts* 2. *v.* 42. so that whoever pretend to be members of the Catholick Church, They cannot justify the title which they assume unless they succeed the primitive Christiens as well in their doctrine and practice as in the bare name which at best is an empty and insignificant thing when there is no solid foundation to support it. This was the great trust which St. *Paul* so earnestly exhorts *Timothy* to keep 1 *Tim.* 6. 20. the rule of faith which they who bend to their corrupt affections and interest, at the same time attempt to break, This is the true measure of our belief and obedience, and though men may multiply Creeds as often as they change their opinions yet there is but one νόμος ἀποδάβατος καὶ μέτρον ἀδιάψευστον, One inviolable law, one infallible Canon for our direction.

There are, I know, some men whose fancy passes with them for faith, and an obstinate humor is the chief article of their religion, for they will allow no Scripture but what they may have the liberty

liberty to indite or at leaſt to interpret as they pleaſe, and indeed their error were excuſable if they had no certain light for their conduct, and we might eaſily pardon the many differences among them if Chriſtian Religion were at variance with it ſelf. But ſince it is all of a piece and we cannot ſo divide Chriſt as to make him in one place ſpeak favourably of any Tenet which he condemns in another, ſince the lively Oracles of God do not, like thoſe which the Devil formerly utter'd, diſmiſs the perſons who humbly conſult them with doubtful anſwers and a double meaning, I can aſſign no other cauſe of the many errors which without any benediction have increaſed and multiplyed, but that ſome who name the name of Chriſt, for by ends and private motives, engage themſelves into parties, and are liſted under another banner though they ſtill bear his inſcription.

For I appeal to all that hear me, whether the fundamentals of our religion are not ſo few as that the meaneſt capacity need not complain of being oppreſſed with their number, and as plain as is conſiſtent with the nature of faith, where the obſcurity of the object enhances the dignity of our belief, and the authority of the revealer may give us an unqueſtionable aſſureance of the truth,

truth, though we cannot have an evidence of it, till we come to a land of vision, and shall be to all eternity employ'd in an intellectual contemplation of what we now see by faint and dark reflections.

Since therefore truth is simple and uniform, and where two differ one only can be in the right, since he who does not belong to the Catholick Church can be of none, The consequence must be, that as many as agree in the necessary articles of the Christian Faith do so far constitute one Church, and that they who cast themselves out of it by obstinate Schism, Heresy or Apostacy, are as far removed from Heaven as they are from the bosome of the Church, it being impossible that they should attain to their journys end who are never in the way that leads to it; for as we have but one hope, and one Lord, so there is but one faith that can enstate us in the possession of that inheritance which he has promis'd.

4*thly*, We have but one Baptism, which is the badge of our profession, the seal of that covenant which we make with Christ, and therefore They who do not receive its impression can have no relation to him. But we must withal consider, that though faith and a federal sanctity is now the

the easy purchase of our birth, and we may by Gods good providence be entred into his Church as soon as we make our first step into the world, though the blessings of the font wash away the pollutions of the womb, and the laver of regeneration removes the guilt of our sinful conception, yet if we cannot answer the solemn obligations of our baptism, the communion which we hold with Christ and his Church is barely presumptive, and such branches can bear no fruit, because they abide not in the vine. *Jo.* 15. 4.

I will add Lastly, that the Church is, or at least should be one by the union of charity, which St. *Paul* exalts above either faith or hope. And truly if the Laws of it were strictly observ'd, though they would not take away all our differences, They might however allay and mitigate the violence of our animosities, Though there will in all likelihood be still a diversity in judgment, yet this would in some measure contribute to an Unity of affection, We might love the persons though we cannot relish their opinions, and by a mutual forbearance (where it is lawful) so far soften the exasperated tempers of our brethren, that, though the humors cannot be clearly purg'd, they might possibly by such gentle lenitives be converted. But even cha-

rity it self will admit of this caution, that we are by no means to purchase peace by the loss and at the expence of truth, The strong in faith are not to be stagger'd by our too liberal condecensions to the weak, nor can we part with any article of our Religion in order to gain a proselyte by such a retrenchment. For God who is a God of order does not require that to gratify others, we should run our selves into confusion.

From the motives, I now proceed to the duties in my Text which should always go together, and as there should be in us a perfect harmony of mind, so our speech ought to be exactly conformable to our sentiments.

He who speaks what he does not think is an Hypocrite, a formal professor, an outward member of the Church, but cannot be reckon'd amongst the society of the faithful.

He who neither thinks nor speaks the same thing with the true members of Christs mystical body is an Heretick. And

He who acknowledges his agreement with the Church of God in the main essential points of Religion, and yet will not joyn himself to its Communion, is a Schismatick, and does not keep the unity of Spirit in the bond of Peace. And of these three I will treat in my following discourse,

because

becauſe each of them act in contradiction to ſome part of the Apoſtles advice, and all of them together wholly defeat it.

1*ſt*. The Hypocrite ſpeaks what he does not think, and owns his relation to the Church as far as we can judge by thoſe ſigns and acts which viſibly affect us. He does indeed anſwer the letter of the Apoſtles advice, frequents the appointed ordinances, ſeems to be zealous and attentive in his devotion, expreſſes a great reverence for the eſtabliſh'd worſhip, and in all appearance acquits himſelf with as much ſincerity as he is really guilty of falſehood. And all this he does to ſerve a turn, to promote a preſent intereſt, and to gain ſome advantage or eſcape ſome penalty by his diſſimulation; He ſerves God in pretenſe, but Mammon is his true maſter. He is a perſon of no Religion though he will comply with that which is moſt countenanc'd, of no principles but what he can get by; Under one revolution you may find him at Maſs, another will drive him to Church, and when things are left indifferent, 'tis odds but you may at laſt lodge him in a Conventicle.

Such a double-minded man, as St. *James* ſays c. 1. *v.* 8. *is unſtable in all his ways*, his Religion is as fickle as the time, as inconſtant as the wea-

ther, and accordingly he is toſs'd to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine. *Eph.* 4. 14. His caſe is deſperate and I am afraid his end is deſtruction, for he who lyes under the force of a falſe perſwaſion and acts agreeably to thoſe principles which he takes to be true, may obtain mercy becauſe with St. *Paul* he does it ignorantly in unbelief, 1 *Tim.* 1. 13. Whereas he who is not ſway'd by judgment but intereſt, not the conviction of his underſtanding but the flexible complyance of his will, muſt deſpair of the like acceptance, becauſe though the object and matter of his religious worſhip might chance to be true, yet the deſign is ill, the end baſe and ſelfiſh; God loaths the ſacrifice and will puniſh the mockery of it.

2*dly*, They who neither think nor ſpeak the ſame thing with the members of the true Church are Hereticks, men who depart from the faith; and theſe are of two ſorts, for they either abridg the Creed into a leſs compaſs, or enlarge it beyond its due proportion, The firſt deny the Saviour who bought them, diſown his ſatisfaction and the merits of his pretious Blood, They ſcoff at the doctrine of the Trinity, take away the neceſſity of Baptiſm, and deſtroy the belief of a Reſurrection, which is the Chriſtian's hope, and the crown

crown of his rejoycing under all afflictions. And if they did not ſeparate from us of their own accord, We ſhould be oblig'd to exclude them out of a Chriſtian communion, for as the Apoſtle ſpeaks 2 *Cor.* 6. 14. *We muſt not be unequally yok'd with unbelievers.* In this caſe when Men do not ſpeak what Chriſt and his Apoſtles have taught, the fault lies wholly at their door, and it is in us an honeſt and neceſſary diviſion to depart from them who deſert the faith, and ſo far from being a breach of charity, that by ſo doing we fulfil the law of it, we admoniſh them of their danger, and ſecure ourſelves from ruin. It would be endleſs to inſiſt upon the particulars in which they differ from the Church of Chriſt, but becauſe the Socinians are the moſt ſubtle and at this time, I think the moſt numerous party, and the main foundation of all their diſputes is the competition which is between faith and reaſon, I will briefly ſhew that what in it ſelf ought to be no matter of controverſy, ſhould not conſequently be the bottom on which the reſt are built.

For if by reaſon we mean that faculty whereby we are enabled to diſcourſe and demonſtrate effects by their cauſes, according to that order and connexion which is in all the parts of nature,

then I confeſs it muſt be diſtinguiſh'd from what we call faith; But when reaſon is enlightned by God's ſpirit, and receives what is propos'd to it upon the ſtrength of God's authority, we may, if we pleaſe give them both two names though I can perceive no difference in their natures, ſince by the powers of the ſame Soul we believe and know, and they may paſs under the name of reaſon or faith, agreeably to the motives on which our aſſent is grounded, for not to trouble my ſelf in a ſearch of an accurate definition, I take faith to be reaſon advanc'd to its utmoſt perfection, and they who conſider the ground of my aſſertion, will not, I hope, accuſe me of ſingularity in the opinion.

A ſecond ſort of men there are who add to the Articles of our faith, as if the Scriptures were not of themſelves able to make us wiſe unto ſalvation, and of this the Church of Rome has been ſo abominably guilty, that there is ſmall hope of ſeeing that fault amended which ſhe will not be ſo ingenuous as to confeſs. And yet the great outcry is rais'd againſt us, and whether we will or no, we muſt paſs for Hereticks, becauſe, though we believe what Chriſt has commanded, we cannot ſcrew our faith to ſo high a pitch as his pretended Vicar would ſtretch it to; We embrace

Gods

God's Word with a ready faith and full aſſent, but becauſe we do not pay the ſame deference and reſpect to the traditions which are contrary to it, we are concluded under a raſh and final ſentence of damnation, with which we might well be terrified, if we had not the ſatisfaction that God and our conſciences do acquit us. For not to mention the many points in which we differ, a reconciliation with the Church of Rome is utterly impoſſible, till a ſenſe of their errors makes them renounce the proud pretenſe to infallibility; and till intereſt and ambition, ſecular deſignes and wordly grandure are wholly layd aſide, the doctrine of the Croſs will never be reduc'd to its primitive purity. And though this faith is ſtill ſpoken of throughout the world *Rom.* 1. 8. the character of it is ſo much changed, that, unleſs error and ignorance are prevailing motives, I think nothing can perſwade us to receive the ſame doctrine, or to ſpeak the ſame thing with them, who have corrupted the ancient faith, which, like its author, was the ſame yeſterday, is the ſame to day, and will continue ſo for ever, *Heb.* 13. 8.

Let them therefore beſtow upon us what titles they pleaſe, as long as we keep to the written word, and as St. *Paul* exhorts *Titus c.* 2. *v.* 7. 8.

*ſhew*

*ſhew uncorruptneſs in doctrine ſound ſpeech that cannot be condemned, He that is of the contrary part will have reaſon to be aſham'd, having no evil to ſay of us,* For a bare affirmation without farther proof can make no man guilty, and what is ſo alledg'd againſt us, is only an inſtance of our enemies malice which will in the event be found a clear argument of our innocence. If it be a fault not to agree with them in the ſuperſtructures which they have built upon the true foundation, We glory in the confeſſion, and the very guilt that we are charg'd with will certainly abſolve us when we are tryed according to Chriſts Goſpel. They have indeed made an addition of as many articles to the Creed as our Saviour had Apoſtles, whether with an intent to deſtroy thoſe which they left by an equal number of a later date I will not ſay; but the oppoſition which is between them would juſtify one in the conjecture that it was meer deſign, becauſe both Creeds cannot conſiſt together, and if *Pius* the *4th* was in the right, it will unavoydably follow that Chriſt and his Apoſtles were in the wrong, ſo that the reaſon why we cannot be perfectly joyn'd with them in one mind and one judgment, is becauſe we cannot aſſociate with them, unleſs in a great meaſure we renounce Chriſt,

Chriſt, we cannot ſuffer our ſelves to be led blindly by the name of the Catholick Church, ſo as to depart from him who is the head and Saviour of it. They therefore are guilty of the ſeparation who were the ſole cauſe of it, and if the Church of God is once turn'd into a Peſt-houſe, they cannot juſtly be blam'd who fly as far as they can, from the infection.

A third ſort of men who act contrary to the Apoſtle's advice, are They who agree with the Church of God in the eſſential points of Religion, and yet occaſion diviſions and offences about matters of leſs moment, and theſe are Schiſmaticks who deſtroy the unity of the Church as the Hereticks ſubverted the faith of it. Saint *Paul* in my Text ſeems in a more eſpecial manner to mark them out, For we may be ſure that He and *Apollos* and *Cephas* preached the ſame doctrine, and yet the *Corinthians* pretended that they could profit more under his miniſtry, who ever He was, whom they held in admiration, then any other Apoſtles, though his gifts and qualifications were in all reſpects equal. Thus they divided Chriſt by bandying into parties and making their ſalvation to depend not ſo much upon Gods word as the perſons who delivered it, and for this reaſon St. *Paul* puts to them a proper

queſtion 1 *Cor.* 3. 5. *Who then is* Paul *and who is* Apollos, *but Miniſters by whom ye believ'd even as the Lord gave to every man? i. e.* We are not the authors of your faith but inſtruments in the hand of God by which his ſpirit acts ſo as to produce in you ſaving faith and the good effects of it, remiſſion of Sins, righteouſneſs and eternal Life, and therefore he who ſets a value upon his own abilities ſeemes Zealous rather of ſeeking followers to himſelf then Chriſt, and they who with partiality of affection run giddily after the Miniſters which are moſt celebrated or which they fancy moſt, forget that *Eph.* 4. 7. *To every one of us is given grace according to the meaſure of the gift of Chriſt*, and he that has a leſs proportion of it has as much as God was pleas'd to afford him, and therefore ought not to be deſpis'd; and he who enjoys it more liberally owes it entirely to God, and therefore has no cauſe to glory, unleſs, as the Apoſtle ſays, it be in the Lord.

You ſee how ſoon this factious preference of Paſtors and Miniſters diſtracted the primitive Church and what diviſions ſprung from this root, and the ſad effects of it are ſo ſenſible in our days, that it is greatly to be lamented, when the diſeaſe is apparent, and the cure ready at hand; that wilful men will not make uſe of the remedy.

dy. It is confeſs'd that the true faith is preached amongſt us, that the Sacraments are rightly and duly adminiſtred, we acknowledg with St. *Peter* Acts 4. 12. *that there is no other name under Heaven but the name of Jeſus given among men whereby we muſt be ſav'd*, and with St. *Paul* 2 Tim. 2. 19. *We earneſtly preſs every one who nameth the name of Chriſt to depart from iniquity*; As to other matters we proceed according to the Apoſtles general rule, who as he commanded that all things ſhould be done decently and in order 1 *Cor.* 14. 40. ſo we think that the preſent governors of the Church are intruſted with the determination of what is otherwiſe left at liberty, provided alſo that all be done to edifying *v.* 26. Upon the ſtricteſt enquiry into our Conſciences we cannot yet tell wherein we have tranſgreſs'd, if our diſſenting bretheren have offered arguments for their ſeparation, I am ſure they have not wanted anſwers; if conformity be a ſin, where the terms of it are by no means unlawful, why does St. *Paul* by ſo ſolemn an adjuration as the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is, exhorts us to ſpeak the ſame thing? And if the duty be neceſſary, why do they obſtruct the performance of it by their non-conformity? Doth our kneeling at the Lord's Sup-

per offend them? We proteſt againſt the adoration of the elements, and 'tis very hard we ſhould not be believ'd. And ſhall we not, O bleſſed Jeſu, in the participation of thoſe holy myſteries, beg thine and thy fathers bleſſing upon our knees, as well as we do to our earthly parents without incurring the ſuſpition of Idolatry? Is the Croſs in Baptiſm a ſtumbling block in their way? Though it repreſents to us a crucified Saviour, yet if that would ſatisfy their ſcruples, when a juſt authority interpoſes in their behalf, we ſhould not be unwilling to diſmiſs the *Sign*, if that would ſtill preſerve amongſt us the *power* of Chriſtianity. Doth the Surplice ſmell ſo rankly of ſuperſtition? and muſt this veil be rent in twain, as that of the Temple was, in order to reconcile our differences? 'Tis pity, Methinks, that ſo laſting a quarrel, ſhould be rais'd on ſo ſlight a ground, for if the Church Triumphant is deſcrib'd to us *Rev.* 19. *v.* 8. *Array'd in fine linnen clean and white*, I cannot ſee why that which is in its ſelf ſo inoffenſive an emblem of innocence, ſhould be excluded out of the Church which is yet militant here on earth.

But why ſhould I ſingle out theſe particulars ſince the whole body of our Liturgy has been the conſtant Butt at which inconſiderate men

men have shot their arrows, even bitter words? And yet when we throughly weigh the prayers of our Church, how that the matter of them is deduc'd from God's word, the method into which they are digested clear and natural; how that the petitions themselves are short and comprehensive and exactly fitted to all those wants which it is either decent or necessary to lay open in publick, how they are so contriv'd as that men of the best capacities have reason to admire, and those of the meanest may sufficiently understand them, if we consider withal, that they are all directed to God in his Son's name, it will puzzle us to imagin what cavils would possibly be rais'd against so excellent a composure. But since the best things do not allways meet with their deserv'd esteem, and 'tis the hard fate of our Liturgy to suffer under their contempt who do not know the value of it, after all that has been urg'd against it, the result is that it is a *form* and consequently an unwarrantable confinement of the spirit, *i. e.* it curbs mens licentious fancies, keeps them within due bounds, and will not allow them to rove wantonly on the Common, when they may enjoy a better pasture in the fenc'd inclosures.

And now because the spirit of dissension co-

vers it ſelf under the goodly pretence to the ſpirit of Prayer, it ſhall not paſs without a due examination.

For if by it we underſtand the ſecret aſſiſtance which the Holy Ghoſt often affords us ſo as to direct our thoughts in the things which we pray for to quicken our deſires, if we acknowledge that through him we are made ſenſible of our wants, that we exerciſe acts of a ſtrong Faith, an ardent love, an affectionate Zeal and an Univerſal charity, This is truly the ſpirit of prayer which is ſo far from being ſtinted in its operations by a determin'd forme, that the good motions of God are greatly improv'd by it; for then we are at leiſure to attend them, and when we fully know what requeſts we are going to put up, we can ſummon all the faculties of our Soul without any diſtraction, we can add freſh fervor to our importunities, new degrees of warmth to our devotion, and being freed from the trouble of invention (which is their caſe who conceive prayer in ſeparate Aſſemblies) and the torment of expecting what others are to utter, (which is their condition who joyn with them in their extempore effuſions after what ſort they can) we have nothing to do but follow each petition with a proportionable affection,

*so that we then praise the Lord withal our Soul and all that is within us do's praise his holy name.*

But if they extend praying by the spirit to signify, that God does immediatly dictate to them the matter, method and very form of their expressions, as in old time the holy men of God spake as they were mov'd by the Holy Ghost, They are under a dangerous mistake and open an inlet to all the wild and frantick Enthusiasms of a distemper'd brain, and plead for the continuance of a supernatural gift, when the reason of its first vouchsafement has long since ceas'd. In the primitive times indeed God bestow'd especial graces upon his Church which against so strong an opposition could not possibly have been planted without his extraordinary assistance, and amongst these the gift of Prayer was of eminent use; for as St. *Chrysostom* observes, One pray'd for the rest, and afterwards such prayers as were thought fit for the common service of all Christians were receiv'd and adopted into the Liturgy of the Church. Now the end of this grace was to prevent confusion, and that all might not pray as they would, God appointed particular persons who should discharge that office according to his direction, and

this is call'd by St. *Jude v.* 20. *Praying in the Holy Ghost,* which extraordinary gift as soon as it discontinued, the Governors of the Church being Apostolical men, provided such forms as came as nigh those indited by God's Spirit, as their memory and proficiency under such instructors did inable them to do. Hence the Learned derive the original of Liturgies amongst Christians, and I am sure that they who will not be convinc'd by their authority, can never disprove their arguments.

These are the constitutions of our Church against which the fiercest objections have been level'd, though to speak my mind freely, I take this to be what a false alarm in war is, and that the dust and clamor is rais'd in one place when they design to attack us in another. For I must needs say that what St. *Paul* upbraids the Christians with, still keeps up the Schism amongst us, and we may derive the continuance of it partly from their *boldness* who exercise a ministry to which they have no call, and would willingly possess themselves of an Usurp'd power, and partly from their *folly* who desert our communion on pretence that they can apply themselves to such as can afford them better instruction and more saveing knowledg. A word to them both and so I will conclude.

I

I would ask the firſt whether in the Apoſtle's word 1 *Ph.* 15. 16. They do not preach Chriſt out of envy and ſtrife, whether they do it ſincerely or out of contention. For were their doctrine never ſo good, if that which was by our Saviour appointed to be the miniſtry of reconciliation, is directed to propagate ſtrife and envy, St. *James* will tell them *c.* 3. *v.* 15. 16. *That this wiſdom deſcendeth not from above, but is earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh, for where theſe are, there is confuſion and every evil work.* If they are clear from any ſuch imputation, the honeſty of their intention may in ſome degree excuſe, but cannot totally juſtify their ſeparation from our publick Aſſemblies. For they will not ſay that they differ from us in any fundamental article of that Faith which we profeſs, and I am yet to ſeek why the ſame Faith ſhould looſe any thing of its purity when it is by us preach'd, and if they cannot object againſt our doctrine what a perverſe ſtubborneſs muſt it be to refuſe to hear it? And I pray God that they who are the Ring-leaders of this Schiſm would conſider how far anſwerable they are for the diſorders which they foment in the Church, and what conſtantly goes along with them, the diſtractions which they continue in the State.

As to thoſe who deſert our communion on pretenſe of receiving better inſtruction elſewhere, I deſire them to reflect whether they are not the very perſons who fulfil the Apoſtle's Prophecy 2 *Tim.* 4. 3. *For the time will come that they will not endure ſound doctrine, but after their own luſts, ſhall they heap to themſelves Teachers, having itching ears, i. e.* They ſhall forſake thoſe whom the Apoſtles and their ſucceſſors have ſet over them, and run after Teachers who will gratify their humor and flatter their fancy by telling them that they are the only adopted children and the true ſons of God. This is indeed ſpiritual wantonneſs and religious leachery which betrays men inſenſibly to perdition when they are not content with the food which God has provided for them, unleſs they require meat alſo for their luſt, *Pſ.* 78. 18. Theſe are in a proper ſenſe the ἀτάκτως περιπατοῦντας, and from them we are commanded to withdraw our ſelves 2 *Theſ.* 3. 6. but that they ſave us that trouble by their own ſinful ſeparation. Piety is their pretence, fancy their chief guide, and curioſity their firſt mover, and I heartily wiſh that when they make ſo many falſe ſteps, they may not at laſt miſs of that which ſhould be every Chriſtians true end, the ſalvation of their Souls, in that

Kingdom

Kingdom into which Hypocriſy cannot enter, where Hereſy cannot dwell, and where inſtead of ſchiſms and diviſions we ſhall enjoy a firm unity and an everlaſting peace.

As for us of the Holy Function, let it be our ſtudy, to inſtruct the ignorant, to reclaim the obſtinate and reprove them with the ſpirit of meekneſs to be all things to all men where in the complyance there is no danger of encreaſing their errors which we ought to ſuppreſs, Let our charity be always mix'd with diſcrétion, and let us promote peace as far as it may conſiſt with the preſervation of truth, and when we have in ſuch inſtances as theſe done our utmoſt endeavours, there will nothing remain but that we ſo ſerve that one Lord whom we acknowledg, ſo live up to that one Faith which we profeſs, ſo perform the engagements of that one Baptiſm by which we are initiated into that Faith, as that we may at laſt obtain that One hope of our calling, that eternal Life, which God, who cannot Ly, has promis'd before the world began. To whom *&c.*

*F I N I S.*